

Press interest in the U.S. tour by 7 Soviet tobacco experts and the counterpart U.S.S.R. tour by American tobacco men was intense.

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Russians Like U.S. Tobacco, Ham

By HAL HERD
Farm News Editor

Mechanization in the culture, curing, and harvesting of tobacco in America made the greatest impression on seven Soviet agricultural experts who visited Robertson County yesterday afternoon.

"We have spent nine days in the United States and have observed many labor-saving methods on tobacco production in Kentucky," said Vasil Kopylov of Moscow, a member of the federal planning commission and specialist in tobacco and tea.

"We harvest tobacco by pulling off the leaves, while in this country the entire stalk is cut and hauled to the barn for curing. We have done this experimentally and may later put it into general use," he declared.

Another member of the delegation, Viktor Sokolov of Moscow, is in charge of manufacture of all foods stuff, including meat, milk, butter, tobacco, and vodka.

While visiting a frozen food locker plant in Springfield, he probed a country-cured ham with an ice pick and was pleased with the aroma. He also enjoyed the thick steak served at lunch.

"IN ADDITION to tobacco, I am observing how you prepare your foods, preserve them, and serve them at meals," he said. "We have had very good food in the United States."

THE DELEGATES were guests of the Eastern Dark Fired Tobacco Growers Association at a steak luncheon in Springfield. They later visited the association office, observed samples of dark-fired tobacco, and toured the farm of Watson Craig, Robertson County agricultural agent, where they observed burley, dark-fired, and dark air-cured varieties.

Headed by M. J. Parshikow, member of the state planning committee of the USSR council of ministers, one of the high ranking agricultural positions, the group is on a three-week tour of major segments of the U.S. tobacco industry under the Department of State's Cultural Exchange Program.

Seven tobacco men from the U.S. are now in the Soviet Union on a similar exchange program.

While in Kentucky last week, they observed new machines to set, prime (remove cured bottom leaves), spray chemicals for sucker control, and a new all-steel, temperature-regulated bulk curing barn.

"TOBACCO is grown in 11 of the 15 republics of the Soviet Union," Parshikow said. "Most of this is a narrow, thin-leaf type somewhat similar to your Virginia tobacco."



—Staff photo by Hal Herd

SPRINGFIELD, Tenn. — Viktor Sokolov, who is in charge of the manufacture of all foods, vodka, and tobacco in Russia, tests the mouth-watering aroma of a country ham during a visit to a frozen food locker plant in Springfield.

"We made experimental plantings of burley but it did not turn out very well. The leaves were thick and the taste in cigarettes was poor."

Last year Russia produced 386 million pounds of tobacco on 370,000 acres. The U.S. produced six times that amount. In addition, the USSR imported 120,000 tons of tobacco, mostly from Turkey, Greece, and India.

"It is our regret that we have no business relations with the United States," Parshikow said. "If we could do business with the U.S., we could strengthen our relations."

He pointed out that production varied from 600 to 3,200 pounds of tobacco per acre depending upon the variety and the season. This compares with an average of 1,800 pounds an acre for burley last year in the U.S., but it is not uncommon for individual crops to soar above the 3,000-pound level.

*REPORTERS on newspapers

In the United States have been very nice to us," Parshikow said. "However, they did make one mistake. They said I am on a secret mission to learn about American women. But it could not be—I am 59 years old and have grandchildren. It must have been Anatoli Sokolov, our economist who is our interpreter and is only 25."

However, Sokolov declined to comment on the American women saying that "maybe his wife might see the newspaper."

Nikolai Zhuraviev, vice president of the tobacco research institute at Krasnodar, did not talk as much as many of the others but he took more notes than anyone. He wrote down the answers given to every question his associates asked.

Other members of the delegation include Mikhail Chachava of the Georgian Republic, and Andrii Nesterenko, tobacco expert from Krasnodar.

Today they will leave Nashville for Winston-Salem, N.C., after a short stop at Knoxville. Other tobacco centers to be visited are Durham and Raleigh, N.C., and Richmond, Va. Tour will be completed Sept. 7 but they will spend three days in New York City before returning to Russia.

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